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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for selected countries and regions

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in compliance with its requests contained in resolutions 60/217, 60/218, 60/225 and 61/217. It provides a status report and an analysis of the current challenges to the delivery of both humanitarian and relief and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners to countries affected by various types of natural and man-made disasters. In compliance with the request of the Assembly to consolidate and streamline reports whenever possible, the country reports under the present agenda item have been consolidated into a single document covering four countries.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with the requests made by the General Assembly in its resolutions 60/217, 60/218, 60/225 and 61/217. It provides a status report and an analysis of the current challenges to the delivery of both humanitarian and relief and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners to countries affected by various types of natural and man-made disasters. In compliance with the request of the Assembly to consolidate and streamline reports whenever possible, the country reports under the present agenda item have been consolidated into a single document covering four countries.

II. Humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to individual countries

A. Djibouti

2. By its resolution 60/217, the General Assembly, inter alia, restated its awareness of Djibouti as a least developed country ranked 150 of the 177 countries studied in the *Human Development Report 2005*. In addition, the Assembly, noting that economic development in the country is constrained by endemic droughts and flooding and by the absence of natural resources that further limit the budgetary, social and administrative infrastructure of the country, expressing its concern at the severe shortage of food and drinkable water and noting the efforts made by the Government of Djibouti to implement reforms, including the approval of a poverty reduction strategy paper with the Bretton Woods institutions, appealed to all Governments, international financial institutions, United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to respond adequately to the needs of the country. Moreover, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue, in close cooperation with the Government, his efforts to mobilize resources for an effective programme of financial, technical and material assistance to Djibouti.

Review of major developments

3. In November 2005, early warning systems indicated that erratic and insufficient rainfall throughout the Horn of Africa would lead to reduced water, pasture land and food availability. Pastoralist or agro-pastoralist communities — among the poorest and most vulnerable — were identified to be most at risk. As a consequence, in January 2006 the Government of Djibouti launched an appeal to the international community for drought assistance. United Nations agencies reacted rapidly, coordinating emergency interventions to respond to the immediate needs of the most affected population groups.

4. Following the emergency appeal, the United Nations Resident Coordinator facilitated a joint rapid assessment of the impact and consequences of the drought by the Government, United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations. This provided the basis for United Nations agencies to prepare project proposals, which were included in the subregional appeal launched in April. Subsequently, proposals aimed to mitigate the consequences of the drought received funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and were implemented by the United Nations agencies concerned in close collaboration with

the Government. Such a coordinated response by the United Nations system was regarded by partners as a major step towards closer cooperation within the United Nations system and between the United Nations country team and national partners, in particular the Government of Djibouti.

5. Despite enhanced coordination, the 2006 multiple indicator cluster survey showed an increase (to 20.7 per cent) in the overall acute malnutrition rate and a 7.5 per cent increase in severe malnourishment. A March 2007 Famine Early Warning Systems Network food security update plan anticipated a further increase in the number of food-insecure pastoralists from 47,500 to as many as 70,000. Over 150,000 people — 30,000 of whom are under 5 years of age — remain at high risk of hunger and malnutrition. Drought and epidemics have left people increasingly vulnerable. United Nations organizations have been effective in tackling acute malnourishment, contributing to a significant drop in hunger-related deaths; however, the improved survival rate of malnourished children and adults has led to an increase in the overall level of malnutrition.

6. Malnutrition rates could soar further with the occurrence of an adverse event, which would compound ongoing humanitarian efforts that are already overstretched. With this in mind, the United Nations country team successfully launched a CERF III proposal in May 2007, calling for urgent support to ongoing relief activities while trying to tackle the underlying causes of hunger by addressing issues such as food availability, water and sanitation, diseases and household food practices. CERF III funding has also allowed relevant agencies, government counterparts and other partners to intervene in higher risk rural and suburban areas with higher acute malnutrition prevalence rates. The interventions are characterized by strong cooperation among United Nations organizations, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

7. A human case of avian influenza was confirmed in Djibouti in May 2006. United Nations organizations immediately mobilized themselves to support the national response. The country team received daily briefings from WHO and FAO. A sensitization programme, highlighting the symptoms and necessary precautions to avoid contamination, was provided to United Nations staff. Cholera outbreaks, which have been ongoing since December 2006, have solicited a similar approach from the United Nations. The disease has been difficult to quell owing to a significant number of illegal border crossings from areas with a high prevalence of cholera.

8. Political turmoil in neighbouring Somalia has been closely monitored by the country team and, though not considered an immediate threat to security in Djibouti, potential consequences, most notably the possible influx of refugees, were incorporated into the revised 2007 United Nations contingency plan. Since Djibouti occupies a strategic position on the Red Sea coast (controlling access to the Red Sea from the Indian Ocean), it is also considered an important transit port for the region and an international trans-shipment and refuelling centre. It hosts important French and United States military and naval bases. About 2,700 French troops, 1,300 to 1,800 United States troops and the headquarters for a multinational Indian Ocean task force are stationed in Djibouti.

Current challenges to development

9. Agriculture and industry in Djibouti are underdeveloped, owing mostly to the harsh climate, high production costs, unskilled labour and very limited natural resources. The country is prone to natural disasters, including recurring droughts, floods and earthquakes. About 74 per cent of the population live in relative poverty (less than $3.30/day). The rate of extreme poverty (less than $1.80/day) is 42 per cent; whole rural areas have even higher rates of poverty. Infant and child mortality rates remain high, at 94 and 67 per 1,000 live births, respectively, and the maternal mortality rate is 546 per 100,000 live births.

10. Social issues, such as the adequate provision of electricity and safe water, as well as access to education and health services, have not been properly addressed. Only about half of the rural population has access to safe water and fewer than 19 per cent have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

11. Fluctuating rainfall and the occurrence of drought are chronic concerns that have been worsening during the past decade, as the frequency of drought has increased, with shorter recovery periods, resulting in a more intense impact on vulnerable populations. This chronic emergency, with cycles of varying intensity, has contributed to livelihood insecurity, asset depletion and long-term vulnerability to crisis. Assistance frameworks which can bridge the gap between recurrent emergencies and the recovery of vulnerable populations are being discussed. However, external factors have the potential to aggravate these precarious conditions further, chiefly through a worsening of the current situation in Somalia.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. The National Social Development Initiative and a new inter-ministerial task force on food security are positive new steps taken by the Government to alleviate hunger and work towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. However, the Government still needs to find the necessary technical and financial resources to address these areas effectively. In addition, urgent humanitarian assistance is required to lessen the consequences of worryingly high levels of malnutrition.

13. The 2003 national poverty reduction strategy paper is currently being evaluated by the World Bank, in consultation with partners, including United Nations agencies. This evaluation coincided with the launch of the National Social Development Initiative in January 2007, which will be taken into account in recommending the road ahead.

14. The United Nations country team has given its full support to this new initiative, which offers a comprehensive and balanced national strategy reflecting the needs of the most vulnerable populations while aligning itself with the Millennium Development Goals. The newly formulated United Nations Development Assistance Framework reflects key areas of action as defined by the National Social Development Initiative. The initiative is based on the principles of decentralization, participation and sound political, social, economic and financial governance and will constitute the new backbone of future economic and social development policies in Djibouti.

B. Ethiopia

15. By its resolution 60/218, the General Assembly, inter alia, welcomed the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia and the international community to strengthen mechanisms to respond to emergency situations and stressed the need to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. It also welcomed the Group of Eight action plan on ending the cycle of famine in the Horn of Africa and called upon all development partners, in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, to integrate relief efforts with recovery, asset protection and long-term development. Moreover, the Assembly welcomed the launch of the Productive Safety Nets Programme.

Review of major developments

16. Over the past two years, Ethiopia continued to face numerous humanitarian challenges. Chronic food insecurity continues to affect the lives of approximately 10 million subsistence agriculturalists and agro-pastoralists. Droughts and flooding remain endemic issues, especially in the context of evolving concerns over global warming. Resource-based political and inter-ethnic complex emergencies continue to cost the country in terms of both lives and livelihoods. Health concerns have also taken their toll on Ethiopia, especially among rural poor populations. Moreover, intermittent animal health emergencies are present in parts of the country.

17. Approximately 10 million subsistence agriculturalist, agro-pastoralists and pastoralists are food insecure and require food or cash assistance annually. Approximately 7.2 million people are covered under the Government-led Productive Safety Nets Programme, which supports the chronically food insecure people thr ugh cash and food transfers. Those in need of emergency food assistance remain at approximately 1.36 million. Consequently, in 2007 a joint Government, United Nations and Humanitarian Partners Appeal requested $180 million to meet emergency food, health and other non-food requirements.

18. Unprecedented nationwide flooding occurred in 2006, affecting 8 of 11 regions in the country. The floods killed more than 700 people and adversely impacted the lives of 600,000 others. These calamities reinforced the need for better national preparedness for rapid onset emergencies. Consequently, in 2007 the Government and humanitarian partners prepared a flood contingency plan to mitigate the severe impacts in anticipation of such natural disasters. Forecasts from the National Meteorological Agency predict similar flooding in at-risk areas during the current rainy season. Localized flooding and landslides have already been reported in the Amhara and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP) regions.

19. Acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) continues to be a cause of concern across the country in 2007. Currently, the Oromiya, SNNP, Amhara, Afar, Harari and Somali regions are reporting cases. The onset of the rains in mid-2007 is feared to further exacerbate the spread of AWD and the trend also indicates increased numbers of cases. Without adequate response, this trend is likely to continue, given the fact that the majority of the AWD-affected populations are located in rural areas with no safe water supply system and inadequate sanitation facilities. Efforts are ongoing by the Government and humanitarian partners to combat the disease. Various coordination forums have been established by the Government and humanitarian partners to proactively address the need for resources and response, including social

mobilization and coordination. Moreover, the potential for avian influenza and Rift Valley fever epidemics in the subregion and malaria remain as continued threats.

20. Since June 2007, new humanitarian challenges have developed in the Somali region owing to the ongoing military operations by the Ethiopian National Defence Force in five zones. The military action has had a severe impact on livelihoods and food security in the region, as all commercial trade from Somalia has been prohibited. The operations have also restricted humanitarian access. Protection of civilians in the midst of government military operations against insurgents has been highlighted as a concern. Dialogue is ongoing between humanitarian partners and the Government in order to support targeted food and health assistance for the affected population. Sustained humanitarian access is also under discussion with the Government.

21. Reports continue of localized inter-ethnic conflict, resulting in population displacement in the Oromiya and Gambella regions. These inter-ethnic clashes cause loss of life and large-scale displacement, and their frequency and complexity have increased. Various efforts by the Government, supported by the United Nations, for conflict resolution were undertaken. In Gambella, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Pastoralist Communication Initiative, in conjunction with the aid organization, Pact International, and the regional government, has facilitated community peace dialogue. In addition, the United Nations-administered Humanitarian Response Fund has funded projects with the organization ZOA Refugee Care and the International Organization for Migration to address the needs of internally displaced persons affected by intra-ethnic conflict.

22. The dispute over border demarcation between Ethiopia and Eritrea remains unsettled, and tension continues along the border where both countries have massive troop deployment. The outbreak of renewed conflict remains a possibility.

23. During the past two years, Ethiopia has hosted some 100,000 refugees, mainly from the Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea, in seven refugee camps. Following the Peace Agreement for South Sudan in 2005, a tripartite agreement among the Governments of the Sudan and Ethiopia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, facilitated the repatriation of 21,000 refugees to South Sudan.

24. Ethiopia has continued to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to Eritrean refugees who are currently arriving at a rate of 200-300 a month. In addition to one established camp, two new distribution points in the Afar region were opened in 2007.

25. The Government is also hosting some 16,000 Somali refugees who arrived nearly two decades ago from South Somalia and is in the process of registering and assisting some 15,000 new arrivals from 2006-2007.

Response

26. The Federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency is responsible for disaster management and overall emergency coordination in the country. United Nations support to the Government is coordinated by the Humanitarian Coordinator with assistance from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations strategic disaster management team.

27. The national disaster management policy and structure are currently under review. This is part of active efforts by the Government to reform disaster management structures in Ethiopia. The new structure will recognize broader definitions and coordination requirements to deal with humanitarian risks and vulnerability, including response to sudden onset emergencies, conflict, urban disasters and internally displaced persons. It will also address the need to build stronger links between humanitarian response, risk reduction, recovery and development.

28. A government reform of the Annual Humanitarian Appeal process was initiated in February 2007 with the launch of the Joint Ethiopian Government and Humanitarian Partners Appeal. It is a marked attempt to move away from the monthly allocations of food aid performed in the past, to a method of case-by-case verification assessments for food and other assistance. The approach is an effort to break the cycle of humanitarian aid dependence that has long characterized Ethiopia. While the new approach has been welcomed by humanitarian partners in principle, implementation challenges have exacerbated delays in humanitarian response to various *woredas* (districts).

29. A separate aspect of the new approach deals with emergency beneficiaries identified in designated Productive Safety Nets Programme *woredas*. As in contrast to past practice, emergency needs identified in these *woredas* will be provided through the utilization of the programme's contingency fund.[1] However, humanitarian partners expressed concern that in many *woredas*, especially in the Oromiya and SNNP regions, the needs of emergency beneficiaries exceed contingency fund resources, leading to gaps in response. Negotiations between the Food Security Bureau and the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency are ongoing in order to refine this new approach and to ensure that all emergency beneficiary needs are addressed. The United Nations and donors are closely monitoring the situation, as this is the first year for the new approach.

30. Supplementing and supporting the Government's disaster management is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's cluster system, which has been rolled out since March 2007. Established clusters supporting the Government include health, nutrition, food aid, agriculture, water and environmental sanitation, camp management, emergency shelter and non-food items and protection, as well as working groups on early warning, early recovery, logistics and emergency telecoms.

31. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework is the common strategic framework for the operational activities of the United Nations system in Ethiopia that supports government development efforts. It provides a collective, coherent and integrated United Nations system response to national priorities and needs, which are included in Ethiopia's second national poverty reduction strategy paper, the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) 2005/6-2009/10. The convergence between Ethiopia, the United Nations system and other development partners around the Millennium Development Goals and PASDEP will provide the organizing principles for this framework (2007-2011).

32. The five areas selected by the United Nations country team in Ethiopia for development cooperation over the period of the United Nations Development

[1] Under the Productive Safety Nets Programme, 20 per cent of total funding for each region is kept as a contingency.

Assistance Framework are designed to contribute to the Government of Ethiopia's primary objectives of achieving the PASDEP targets by 2010 and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The priority areas for action in the 2007-2011 framework are: humanitarian response; recovery and food security; basic social services and human resources; HIV/AIDS; good governance; and enhanced economic growth.

33. In addition to requesting direct contributions from donors towards the Annual Humanitarian Appeal, CERF and the Humanitarian Response Fund are available to address gaps in assistance so as to respond to sudden emergencies and to address under-funded areas of emergency needs. A target of $15-20 million has been set for contributions towards the Humanitarian Response Fund, and $9 million has been allocated for Ethiopia through the under-funded window of CERF as of August 2007.

34. The United Nations Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Kjell Magne Bondevik, undertook several trips to the Horn of Africa, including visits to Ethiopia. Supported by the United Nations, the Governments of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Djibouti have agreed to develop country-based food security roadmaps to tackle the root causes of rising hunger across the drought-plagued region. There is concern that the next major crisis in the region could force more than 20 million people into needing emergency assistance.

Challenges

35. The Government and humanitarian partners face some challenges in the implementation of the new approach to relief allocation, including delays in identifying and addressing critical humanitarian needs. Moreover, challenges remain in ensuring appropriate linkages to the Productive Safety Nets Programme when they exceed what can be met by the programme's contingency funds.

36. The ongoing occurrence of acute watery diarrhoea cases continues to pose a challenge for preventive and control measures.

37. The deeply rooted poverty is an aggravating factor that increases vulnerability to crisis and disasters. Very poor infrastructure also continues to hamper humanitarian response and development.

38. Recurring security situations in border areas as well as the increase in frequency and complexity of inter-ethnic conflicts pose an enormous challenge to humanitarian activities.

Recommendations and conclusions

39. There is a need for improving preparedness, contingency planning and risk reduction, in particular for rapid onset emergencies such as floods, to facilitate early response. Extremely poor infrastructure development, particularly roads, also hampers humanitarian access, especially during floods.

40. There is also a need for a more comprehensive approach to address predictable/acute needs in health, nutrition, water and sanitation and agriculture as well as a more rational approach to deal with the particular needs of vulnerable groups, including pastoralists.

41. Strengthened dialogue is needed with the Government to improve and increase humanitarian access in the Somali region in order to avert human suffering.

42. The ongoing Acute Watery Diarrhoea epidemic has signalled the need to link emergency water and sanitation interventions with long-term development programmes for prevention.

C. Philippines

43. By its resolution 61/217, the General Assembly, concerned about the oil spill from a tanker that sank 13 nautical miles off the south-western coast of the Province of Guimaras on 11 August 2006, acknowledging the timely assistance provided by many States and United Nations agencies and noting the immediate response by the Government of the Philippines, invited Member States and concerned United Nations bodies, as well as international financial institutions and development agencies, to provide additional economic and technical assistance in the post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes. In addition, it invited the international community and the United Nations system and other international organizations to increase their support for the strengthening of the disaster risk management and disaster preparedness capacity of the Philippines.

Review of major developments

44. In responding to the oil spill, the Government of the Philippines used $100,000 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) core funds specifically earmarked for emergencies to enhance its ability to address the humanitarian needs arising from the disaster and to build longer-term capacity for local governments and communities. The UNDP assistance was used in the following four components: (1) support to the damage assessment team (Guimaras Task Force); (2) environmental damage assessments; (3) early recovery projects for the community; and (4) building local capacity for disaster rehabilitation and preparedness.

45. An initial fact-finding mission composed of members of UNDP and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Government identified the humanitarian needs of the affected people. The mission also developed a strategy based on best practices to assist coastal clean-up activities initiated by the provincial government.

46. Following this, a rapid needs assessment mission was deployed, led by UNDP, involving the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of Civil Defense of the Philippine Government. This led to the drafting of an early recovery assessment report. The report was presented to the Government of the Philippines and widely distributed to relevant agencies and organizations on 4 October 2006. It recommended that a communications strategy is needed for future disasters in collaboration with local and national media. Furthermore, a clear and authoritative coordination structure is necessary to guide multidepartmental inputs and responsibilities, donor contributions and media relations in order to minimize possible duplication of effort. There is also a need for awareness-building, mitigation and preparedness planning for coastal communities along all major shipping lanes. Greater attention should be paid to the needs of women, children and the disabled when families are required to relocate temporarily

to camps and locations away from n their homes. Alternative livelihoods training and skills development should be a c coordinated effort among all non-governmental organizations, United Nations agen ncies and government organizations. Authoritative investigations should be undertake ken prior to the rehabilitation of mangrove areas and the commercial seaweed prod oduction areas to guide a coordinated effort that avoids duplication and provides bot oth policy and guidelines for the long-term coastal ecosystem rehabilitation. Finally, t the report also recommended the promotion and marketing of Guimaras as a tourism m destination.

47. The provincial government, i in coordination with other national government agencies, particularly the Departme ent of Science and Technology and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority, provided assistance to affected populations through the establishme ent of an alternative livelihood project for coastal residents, whose livelihoods were re previously dependent on fisheries. Technical assistance was provided to conduct t livelihood assessments, and eight projects were funded, including chicken and duck k egg production, salabat production, tilapia/hito aquaculture, native chicken produc uction, small-scale food processing, a business development project and a materials als recycling project. Though the final report was submitted in February 2007, the live velihoods initiative has been so successful that it continued beyond its originally inten ended cycle.

48. Environmental damage assess ssment is still being conducted by DENR, in cooperation with the University of of the Philippines in the Visayas and Silliman University, which looked at mangrov ove, marine reserve and biodiversity damage. The final report is still in draft form, but it quarterly reports have created a positive impact by enhancing government planning g in the areas of: coastal clean-up; determining food safety of marine products in af affected areas; and identification and planning of environmental rehabilitation program mmes, including rehabilitation of mangroves.

49. As part of wider knowledge tra ransfer and capacity-building efforts, individuals and organizations whose property w was damaged by the spill were provided with instruction and materials on how ow to make compensation claims from the International Tanker Owners Polluti ution Federation (ITOPF). Over 80 participants attended a September 2006 works kshop and 3,700 information, education and communication materials were distri ributed in English and the local language. Local government, non-governmental org rganizations and academia were involved in workshops on how to integrate the heir activities in coastal zones and strengthen preparedness for future disasters.

50. The chief of coastal and mari rine management from DENR travelled to the Netherlands to participate in training g in integrated coastal management provided by the Institute for Water Education of f the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Topics includ ded enhancing local governmental capacity for coastal and marine management and d rehabilitation after natural disasters. Based on this workshop, the chief provided tra raining to five coastal local government units in the province of Guimaras, other sta stakeholders (such as students and community organizations) and technical personne el of DENR in the region.

Current challenges to development

51. The coastal clean-up activitie ies conducted by the people of the local communities were originally initiated d by the provincial governor as a cash-for-work programme. The first phase of clean-u -up activities concluded at the end of 2006. The

second phase, still to be implemented, will require more strategic planning, including specific targeted areas, such as mangrove forests and the national marine reserve. With UNDP assistance, DENR has been conducting environmental assessments that will help them draft an effective environmental restoration plan.

52. For the environmental assessment, it was revealed that better coordination was needed among different players with clearer identification as to who will assess what. Consolidating these data into one report presented a challenge, as different players were tasked to carry out similar assessments by different government agencies at various levels. Linked to this, the various governmental entities used different international and national safety standards. As one of the mechanisms to improve coordination among government agencies, UNDP has recommended that one governmental entity, DENR, act as the official clearing house for environmental data.

53. With respect to the alternative livelihoods programme, the majority of the projects have proved to be successful and sustainable beyond the project lifespan and have helped to diversify the local economy. The provincial government is currently continuing with the livelihoods programme and a follow-up report is due.

Recommendations and conclusions

54. The final report from the ongoing environmental assessment will be submitted by DENR, but interim reports have been helping the Government to develop its recovery and rehabilitation plans.

55. In second phase clean-up, the effectiveness of environmental restoration should be supported by ensuring sound technical expertise and through the provision of proper equipment for the clean-up workers to protect them from any health risks.

56. The compensation claims workshops and pamphlets have allowed institutions as well as individuals to make compensation claims to ITOPF through the provincial government. Reports state that some compensation has already been made to the most affected people.

57. A report on the alternative livelihood programme has been submitted by DENR and the government of Guimaras province. Both DENR and the provincial government indicated the successful implementation of the projects, which have significantly diversified the local economy. The report noted that from the initial activities, at least 3,500 families — who are mostly reliant on fishing[2] and live in the most affected areas — benefited from the projects either directly or indirectly. Follow-up assessments on the livelihoods project will be conducted by the provincial government.

58. Capacity-building training on integrated coastal zone and disaster risk management for the local government units in Guimaras has been conducted by the Chief of the Coastal and Marine Division of DENR, region 6, with active participation by the Governor of Guimaras, five mayors and development planning officers from the local government units. In addition, the Philippine Coast Guard, local non-governmental organizations and academia, including the University of the

[2] Fishing is the major source of income for at least 30 per cent of the population in Guimaras, with a total annual production of around 2,800 metric tons (2003). The oil spill has temporarily paralysed fishing activities, leaving the local fishing communities with no livelihood.

Philippines in the Visayas, provided inputs to the training. The training session will be documented and shared with relevant government agencies at both the national and local levels.

59. As part of ongoing efforts to clean up, rehabilitate and stabilize the environment in the spill zone, a work and financial plan was submitted to UNDP by DENR outlining intended monitoring and evaluation approaches in 2007. The plan specifically targets water quality monitoring, mangrove monitoring and mapping, and a biodiversity assessment.

60. There is still significant need for additional support in achieving the longer-term objectives that include: full restoration of the damaged environment; further development and strengthening of alternative livelihood programmes; improved disaster risk management; preparedness and mitigation to build disaster-resilient communities; and promoting development in the tourism sector.

Rwanda

61. By its resolution 60/225, the General Assembly, commending the tremendous efforts of the Government and people of Rwanda and civil society organizations, as well as international efforts, to provide support for restoring the dignity of the survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to encourage the relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to implement resolution 59/137 expeditiously, encouraged all Member States to provide assistance to survivors of the genocide, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence and called upon Member States to continue to support the development of Rwanda.

Review of major developments

62. Rwanda's society, infrastructure and economy were heavily damaged by the genocide of 1994 and the preceding decades of poor governance. With the majority of educated professionals massacred or displaced, the legal, educational and administrative infrastructure was greatly affected and capacities at all levels remain weak. Humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of the genocide was replaced in the mid-1990s by development efforts focused on the re-establishment of basic institutions and services, stabilization of the economy and development of sustainable public policies, with a strong commitment to poverty reduction.

63. Despite the horrors of 1994, the Government and people of Rwanda made remarkable progress. The political transition was completed in 2003 with the adoption of a new Constitution and the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections. Political decentralization has been initiated, with local elections held in 2004 and 2006.

64. Considerable efforts have been made to advance reconciliation, such as the reintegration of ex-combatants and displaced persons, including returnees from neighbouring States. Nonetheless, justice is a key element to reconciliation and reconstruction. The most serious genocide-related cases are heard in conventional courts or at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. Over 740,000 persons accused of minor crimes in connection with the genocide are envisaged to be judged through a modified traditional justice system called *gacaca* that was launched last year.

65. Since 1994, Rwanda's economy has continued to grow moderately. The agriculture sector remains the main contributor to employment and gross domestic product growth and is central to the livelihoods of the vast majority of the population. Poverty is declining, from around 70 per cent in 1994 to under 60 per cent in 2001 and less than 57 per cent currently. Rwanda has started work on a new economic development and poverty reduction strategy that will place increased emphasis on economic growth and the establishment of an environment favourable to private and foreign investments. Progress is also noticeable in the strengthening of financial institutions. The World Bank, the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Nations agencies, as well as a number of donors aim to align their programmes with the principles of the new economic development and poverty reduction strategy.

66. The United Nations country team is conducting needs assessments, in consultation with concerned ministries, in order to support the development of the new poverty reduction strategy paper, which will inform planning and programming for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The present United Nations Development Assistance Framework was extended for one year to allow an effective alignment with the national planning process. Rwanda is also a priority country for the Integrated Package of Services to Support Millennium Development Goals National Development Strategies and host to a Millennium Research Village.

67. The United Nations country team has established good partnerships with other development organizations and is undertaking activities across key sectors. It is co-leading aid coordination with the Ministry of Finance, working through sectoral clusters. The team is also supporting the Government's decentralization process in addition to capacity-building projects for the Ministry of Finance. In this regard, it assists in good governance efforts, with a particular emphasis on poverty reduction programmes, and helps to strengthen key institutions such as the Parliament, the Supreme Court and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

68. The Government of Rwanda is crafting a new aid management policy, drawn on the principles of the Paris Declaration, in order to continue improving the coordination of development assistance. To this end, budget support from donors has been declared as the most welcome aid modality. Currently, one third of external assistance is provided in this form. So far, general budget support has been provided by the World Bank, the European Commission, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the African Development Bank and Germany, which has recently announced its intention to use this modality. Significant achievements were also made in the areas of public finance management, administration and decentralization, export strategy, rule of law, accountability and corruption, planning for financial sector development and maintenance of macroeconomic stability.

69. Access to health services and education is increasing. Primary education enrolment is now at 94 per cent, with 100 per cent gender parity. Nevertheless, acute malnutrition and underweight rates persist among children under 5 years of age.

70. Rwanda plays an increasingly stabilizing role on a regional level and was one of the first three African nations to participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It has also sent troops to the Sudan with the African Union and is part of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

Current challenges to development

71. According to the national poverty threshold of $162 per annum, 56.9 per cent of the population lived in poverty in 2006, while extreme poverty levelled at 34 per cent. High levels of population growth (3.5 per cent per year) confronting, in certain areas, low and decreasing levels of agricultural productivity and increasingly harsh climatic cycles hamper development efforts and burden the most vulnerable households significantly.

72. Rwanda has made substantial progress in addressing the health of its population since the end of the war and the genocide. However, too many Rwandans die of diseases that could be cured or prevented through increased access to safe water and improved sanitation, simple health interventions and sensitization about disease prevention, nutrition and good hygiene practices. The burden of HIV/AIDS continues to threaten Rwanda's economic and social fabric and the public health system in terms of cost of treatment, care and support. The pandemic is an added burden on families and communities, increasing their vulnerability, limiting their productive capacity and overstretching community-based care and support systems. The combined effects of genocide, war and HIV/AIDS have led to an unprecedented number of orphans, child and elderly-headed households.

73. While Rwanda has a strong policy and planning framework for achieving the targets of the Millennium Development Goals concerning health and HIV/AIDS, effective implementation of these instruments suffers from insufficient investment and human resources capacity at all levels of public administration.

74. Rwanda has made remarkable progress in meeting national and international primary education enrolment and parity goals, owing in part to a target-based education sector strategy and effective donor coordination through the establishment of a system-wide approach. However, challenges remain, such as the lack of access to primary education for vulnerable children and children with special needs because of inadequate infrastructure and direct and opportunity costs of schooling. A high level of non-completion of primary education prevails. For example, only 16 per cent of enrolled girls finish primary school owing to poverty, the absence of qualified teachers and adapted curricula, and insufficient infrastructure unable to meet basic water, sanitation and hygiene needs. The key challenge will be to ensure that sufficient infrastructure, organizational and human resources capacity exists to adequately deliver the minimum quality standards to all Rwandan children, especially those most vulnerable, and at all levels of schooling.

75. While significant progress has been made in terms of public sector reform, control of corruption and decentralization, advances remain fragile.

Conclusions and recommendations

76. The past years have witnessed increased commitment by the United Nations system to continue supporting Rwanda in its efforts to meet the challenges that followed the 1994 genocide. Technical and financial support was provided by various United Nations agencies contributing to the formulation and implementation of social and economic policies in favour of the poor and disadvantaged, in particular orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence.

77. However, for the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved, the United Nations country team needs further support in order to invest in priority sectors of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework: governance, health, education, environment, sustainable growth and social services.

78. The main areas of intervention for the United Nations are: education for orphans in particular and for adolescents in reproductive health as well as support to child-headed households and for children in emergency situations; medical care and treatment for victims of sexual violence, with a particular focus on HIV-positive victims; capacity-building and rehabilitation of maternal and child health services as well as support to reproductive health education; trauma and psychological programmes for genocide survivors, with a focus on enhancing protection from gender-based violence; assistance to women's associations supporting vulnerable women; and support to the national witness protection programme.

79. Further areas of support include housing for and assistance to vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, returnees and internally displaced persons; income-generating activities and access to medical care; capacity-building and microcredits programmes to promote self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation; enhancement of small businesses; livelihood initiatives for and assistance to orphans and vulnerable children as well as protection from gender-based violence; and support to the formulation and implementation of gender-mainstreamed social and economic policies in favour of the poor and disadvantaged.